

VZCZCXRO4879  
RR RUEH DU RUEH MR RUEH RN  
DE RUEH SA #3939/01 3171521  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 131521Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2659  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 5078  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 9375  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 003939

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: (C) ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE  
PRETORIA 00003939 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In the run-up to the ANC national conference 16-20 December, allegations of bribes and intimidation directed at ANC branch members and Polokwane delegates are surfacing from Zuma, Mbeki, and Sexwale camps. Press reports allege that ANC branch members in North West are being intimidated into voting for Mbeki and followers, while pro-Zuma regional and provincial ANC members in KwaZulu-Natal are being sent out to oversee all branch meeting where nominations and conference delegations are discussed. Embassy officers also have been hearing reports of cash, cars, and positions being offered or promised and voting conference delegates being monitored. If true, the manipulation of votes, hopes and fears underscores the intensity of what is turning out to be a knock-down, drag-out succession race. In the long-term, it also could set a disturbing trend that undermines South Africa's democratic institutions. END SUMMARY.

-----  
NO DEBATE NEEDED  
-----

¶2. (C) According to press reports, supporters of ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma and Tokyo Sexwale have complained that they are being intimidated by Mbeki's camp. ANC branches in the Mafikeng region of North West have written to ANC Secretary General Kgalema Motlanthe to complain that they are

SIPDIS  
being threatened by the provincial leadership to support Mbeki for a third term. They also have complained that the provincial executive committee (PEC) is trying to impose a list of pro-Mbeki names on branches and that some anti-Mbeki branches are being purposefully disqualified from voting. North West ANC Secretary Supra Mahumapelo publicly confirmed that the PEC drew up an "official document" with names of who should be nominated, but denied intimidating anyone, saying branches were free to disagree. (COMMENT: This is not surprising. During a trip to Mafikeng in August, a councillor told PolOff that the PEC had instructed regions not to discuss the "two centers of power" debate. When asked if this meant grassroots members had no say, he said matter of factly, "Oh no, we'll let them debate, but the majority feeling has already been established." END COMMENT)

¶3. (C) ANC members in KwaZulu-Natal have complained about intimidation from pro-Zuma supporters. According to press reports, pro-Zuma regional and provincial leaders are

deploying officials to run branch meetings where nominations and conference delegations are decided. Press reports also note an eThekweni regional official canceled a branch meeting after members decided to deviate from the pro-Zuma list that was drawn up by the provincial leadership for them. ANC members also are publicly complaining that officials are keeping tabs on anyone who "sells out," meaning voting for anyone other than Zuma. An anonymous ANC member is publicly quoted as saying, "this creates an environment where there is no discussion, as branch members who do not back Zuma are effectively intimidated into keeping quiet if they want to be on the list of delegates." (COMMENT: This comment begs the question of whether voting delegates are going to vote the way they are expected. END COMMENT)

-----  
THE PRICE OF LOYALTY  
-----

¶4. (C) Pietermaritzburg's (KwaZulu-Natal) municipal manager, Rob Haswell, and mayor Zanele Hlatshwayo (who is also an ANC regional executive member, Albert Luthuli's granddaughter, and probably pro-Zuma) also complained separately to Durban Consul General on 06 November about the high level of bribery involved in swaying Polokwane's voting delegates. The Mayor said specifically that six brand new vehicles had shown up in the area recently, and that ANC members were driving Audis and other vehicles that were definitely beyond their means. ANC Researcher Wande Makalima (protect) told PolOff on 07 November that he also has heard that votes are being bought, especially in Gauteng province, but refused to elaborate. He did caution, however, that though people may take money, it does not necessarily mean they are in your pocket. "At the end of the day, it's a secret ballot and loyalty can't always be bought," he said.

-----  
WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK (LITERALLY)

PRETORIA 00003939 002.2 OF 002

-----  
¶5. (C) Business Day political editor Karima Brown (protect) also told PolOff on 31 October that she is getting calls "everyday" from Polokwane delegates complaining about political pressure. She said in some instances, delegates are being assigned "minders to watch their every move and meet their every need." She also said that there is cash and the promise of jobs being passed around at the individual, branch, and provincial level. Both Hlatshwayo and Haswell also said they believe that cash is being doled out, but did not say who was giving it to whom.

-----  
ALLEGATIONS UNDERSCORE UNCERTAINTY  
-----

¶6. (C) Mayor Hlatshwayo believes the level of corruption signals the desperation involved in the ANC election process. She also added that she fully expected the Presidency to be contested at the conference, noting that there is "too much at stake" for it to be otherwise. Haswell, Hlatshwayo, and Brown separately mentioned that tensions within the ANC were higher than they had ever seen. Brown, especially, expressed concern about both the short and long-term implications of vote buying, wondering what is being promised after the election and the long-term impact on democracy in South Africa.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

¶7. (C) Post cannot confirm the scale of intimidation or alleged attempts at vote-buying, or even whether such acts

have been self-initiated by partisan loyalists and advocates or directed by competing leadership contestants. Some form of political intimidation -- even political violence, including targeted killings of "political enemies" -- is not new to the ANC, but if combined with corruption of votes to be cast in December, it could have profound immediate, short and long-term effects. Most immediately, these allegations are reinforcing the widely-held belief by Mbeki's detractors (whether true or not) that Mbeki is willing to win at all costs. They also have the potential to disrupt or mar the election result in December, if enough delegates decide to cry foul play. If allegations are more widespread than we are led to believe, they also could represent a risk to South Africa's young democracy.

BOST